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ABSTRACT

Three pieces of education legislation that the federal government enacted in 1994 are interlocking and designed to support a systemic approach to state and local educational improvement. The Goals 2000: Educate America Act, School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA), and Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) offer an opportunity to move from a categorical mindset to a broader framework for conceptualizing educational improvement and think about the long-term purposes of education in the context of work force and economic development. At a St. Louis (Missouri) conference, state teams shared and discussed strategies for linking school-to-work plans with broader educational reform initiatives, with emphasis on understanding how STWOA, Goals 2000, and IASA can complement each other. The initial challenge for states interested in a consolidated plan for federal programs is creation of a conceptual framework. Conference participants have identified a set of core issues that they confront on the road to a coherent set of policies and programs that ensure a high quality education for all students. Communication issues include communication with state and local professionals and policymakers, intra-agency and interagency communication, communication with the public and business and industry, and the federal role. Turf issues revolve around the relationship between K-12 and higher education and state and local turf. Two generic types of resource issues are funding and time. Equity is also an issue. (YLB)

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THE CHALLENGE *of* LINKING PLANS *for* SCHOOL-TO-WORK OPPORTUNITY SYSTEMS

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The Challenge of Linking Plans for School-to-Work Opportunity Systems

By Nancy E. Adelman

Fourth in a Series on School-to-Work Implementation

Council of Chief State School Officers
Washington, DC
1995

Council of Chief State School Officers

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nationwide non-profit organization of the 57 public officials who head departments of public education in every state, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Dependents Schools, and five extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO seeks its members' consensus on major educational issues and expresses their view to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, to Congress, and to the public. Through its structure of standing and special committees, the Council responds to a broad range of concerns about education and provides leadership on major education issues.

Because the Council represents the chief education administrators, it has access to the educational and governmental establishment in each state and to the national influence that accompanies this unique position. CCSSO forms coalitions with many other education organizations and is able to provide leadership for a variety of policy concerns that affect elementary and secondary education. Thus, CCSSO members are able to act cooperatively on matters vital to the education of America's young people.

The CCSSO Resource Center on Educational Equity provides services designed to achieve equity and high quality education for minorities, women and girls, and for disabled, limited English proficient, and low-income students. The Center is responsible for managing and staffing a variety of CCSSO leadership initiatives to assure education success for all children and youth, especially those placed at risk.

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Series Introduction

In 1991 the Council of Chief State School Officers established a multi-year priority of improving connections between school and employment for all students. The Council's aim is to improve education and experiences that bridge youth and adulthood and prepare American youth for immediate or eventual entry into the world of employment.

A formal policy statement adopted by the Council in 1991, *Connecting School and Employment* set in motion a series of activities and reports for improving paths for American youth to prepare for productive employment; restructuring schools to support this objective; and identifying new responsibilities for schools, businesses, employee organizations, and postsecondary institutions to establish sound career preparation patterns for the majority of our youth. The policy statement was an effort to recognize the need for developing successful (a) methods of integrating academic and occupational education and work-basked learning, such as high-quality cooperative education, youth apprenticeship, and service learning; and (b) high school programs that result in a high school diploma, postsecondary credential, and certification of occupational skills.

On March 31, 1994, President Clinton signed into law the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*. Title I of the Act identifies eight goals to be reached by the year 2000 that call for all children to be ready to learn; a high school graduation rate of at least 90 percent; students demonstrating competency over challenging subject matter when they leave grades 4, 8, and 12; professional development for teachers; American students' achievement first in the world in math and science first in the world; universal literacy for America to compete in a global economy; schools free of drugs, alcohol, and violence and offering a disciplined environment conducive to learning; and partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional and academic growth of children.

Shortly after Goals 2000 established a framework to improve education in America, President Clinton signed into law, on May 5, 1994, the *School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994*. It specifically provides guidance for states to establish systems that address Goal 6: Every American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy. The guidance provided in the School-to-Work Act identifies the common features, basic program components and student outcomes of a school-to-work transition system. A school-to-work transition system would be statewide and (a) help youth acquire the skills, abilities, and labor market information needed to make a smooth transition from school to career-oriented work or further education or training, (b) have substantial impact on the preparation of youth for a first job in a high-skill, high-wage career and in increasing opportunities for further education, and (c) support new and expanded ways of integrating work-based and school-based learning, occupational and academic learning, and strengthening the linkages between secondary and post secondary education.

To assist states in the development and implementation of school-to-work systems and encourage states' progress toward achieving Goal 6, the Council has invited or commissioned a series of papers to focus on issues of significance in designing school-to-work transition systems in states. In order to keep pace with a fast moving policy domain, the topics for papers will be flexible, over the course of the year. The Council will publish the papers in a series, make them available through electronic media, and compile the work in a final document that will be widely disseminated.

Support for the series is provided, in part, by The Pew Charitable Trusts, The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Exxon Education Foundation and the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.

The focus of this paper, "The Challenge of Linking Plans for School-to-Work Opportunity Systems" combines information from a briefing paper prepared by the author based on survey research data from CCSSO's *Survey of State School-to-Work Opportunity Systems* (1994) and states' experiences at a CCSSO conference that brought state teams together to share and discuss strategies for linking their School-to-Work Opportunity Act plans with broader educational reform initiatives. The article reflects states' work in understanding how *School-to-Work Opportunities Act*, *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* and *Improving America's Schools Act* can complement each other.

The Challenge of Linking Plans for School-to-Work Opportunity Systems

By Nancy E. Adelman

Nancy Adelman is a consultant with Policy Studies Associates in Washington, DC.

The views expressed in this article by Ms. Adelman are her own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Council or its funding source.

Introduction

This article is based on the proceedings of an invitational conference organized by CCSSO with support from The Pew Charitable Trusts and The Mott Foundation. Information from the conference is augmented by results from a 50-state survey of school-to-work system-building efforts conducted by CCSSO in summer 1994.

In 1994, the federal government enacted three pieces of education legislation that are interlocking and designed to support a systemic approach to state and local educational improvement. Two of the statutes—the Goals 2000: Educate America Act and the School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA)—offer new federal seed money to assist states and localities in the development and implementation of reforms. The central intent in both acts is quite clear: establishment of world-class K-12 education systems in which ***all*** students achieve to high standards—whatever their post-high school plans.

Goals 2000 and STWOA encourage state and local governments and educators to create greater coherence and seamlessness in policies, programs, and practices. In order for this to work, a number of federal statutes that we have traditionally tended to view as "programs" must also be brought into alignment so that laws and regulations do not restrict or prohibit the direction of reform further down the line. Last fall (1994), the U.S. Department of Education and the Congress began the federal alignment task by enacting the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) which (among other things) reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act's important federal resources for compensatory education programs. IASA is designed to promote flexibility and reduce burden at state and local levels in exchange for greater accountability for improved student outcomes.

Taken together, Goals 2000, STWOA, and IASA offer a rare opportunity for taking stock and changing course, for moving from a categorical mindset to a broader framework for conceptualizing educational improvement, and for thinking about the long-term purposes of education in the context of workforce and economic development. However, the task is challenging, and there are no blueprints. To avoid a stillbirth, the venture will depend on open lines of communication, clear and consistent messages, candidness, trust, and mutual support—features that are not necessarily standard in traditional operating relationships within and between federal, state, and local levels of the country's education and training systems. Opportunities for dialogue and forums for sharing must be created to facilitate the process.

With this in mind, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) convened a conference (January 1995) in St. Louis for a small group of state teams to share and discuss strategies for linking their STW plans with broader educational reform initiatives—with a particular emphasis on understanding how STW, Goals 2000, and IASA can complement each other. Participation in the conference was by an application and selection process.

States that attended the St. Louis conference were at various stages in the planning, development, and implementation of systemic educational reform. One indicator of this range of experience is shown in Table 1. Both Goals 2000 and the School-to-Work Opportunities Act offer states two stages of funding—initial planning development money and subsequent larger amounts for implementation. All states have had one or more planning grants from STWOA; only eight (including conference participants Kentucky and Oregon[1]) currently have implementation grants. As of January 1995, most states had applied for their Goals 2000 planning funds, but some (including conference participants Mississippi and South Dakota) had not. No state had an approved Goals 2000 implementation plan at the time of the conference, although Kentucky and Oregon had submitted plans for approval, and Oregon's plan had been through the peer review process.

The Opportunity

Goals 2000, STWOA, and IASA all include specific statutory language allowing for the development of consolidated state and local plans that support a unified vision and direction for systemic reform. Because the acts require broad-based participation in plan development and because, taken individually, each is on a somewhat different reporting and accountability track with the federal government, federal policymakers devised a two-stage process for submission of consolidated state plans. In summer 1995, states may submit a preliminary plan—a "plan to plan," so to speak—that is a roadmap to an approach for developing a full consolidated plan for submission in summer 1996.

At the St. Louis conference, federal officials offered some guidance to the states on how to think about the consolidated planning process. First and most importantly, they stressed that both the process and the product should **not** be viewed as simply an exercise for obtaining federal funds. Rather, states should use the two-stage process as an opportunity to initiate or continue systemic reform activities that fit their own contexts.

No one yet knows quite what an excellent consolidated plan will look like. Even states with relatively mature blueprints for reform have not prepared one. There is clearer understanding of what a consolidated plan is not. As one federal official put it, "We do not have in mind just a big staple holding together several separate plans." The federal vision is that consolidated planning will be "a driving force for thinking about how all Federal, State, and local activities might work together…so that student academic achievement, rather than individual program administration, truly is the focus of our work." [Memorandum to Chapter 1 and Even Start State Coordinators, U.S. Department of Education, December 1994]

Although the St. Louis conference focused on STW, Goals 2000, and IASA, states are by no means limited to these programs when they develop a consolidated plan. These three pieces of legislation also uniformly specify that other federal funding streams (for example, certain parts of the Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act and the McKinney Homeless Education Act) may be linked as well. As we shall see in a subsequent section of this article, some states are considering casting a very wide net.

[1] Oregon sent a representative to the conference rather than a full working team.

Table I

Accessing Federal Seed Funding for Educational Reform: Status of Nine States

January 1995

State	Goals 2000 Planning Grant	Goals 2000 Implementation Grant	STW Planning Grant	STW Implementation Grant
Arizona	Yes	No	Yes	No
California	Yes	No	Yes	No
Kentucky	Yes	Approved*	Yes	Yes
Louisiana	Yes	No	Yes	No
Mississippi	No**	No	Yes	No
Missouri	Yes	No	Yes	No
New Mexico	Yes	No	Yes	No
Oregon	Yes	Approved*	Yes	Yes
South Dakota	No	No	Yes	No

* *In January 1995, Oregon became the first state to receive federal approval of its Goals 2000 Implementation Plan. Kentucky's plan was approved in April.*

** *Mississippi intended to submit an application for Goals 2000 planning funds early in 1995.*

Waivers

Goals 2000 and STWOA contain parallel language giving administering federal agencies the authority to grant waivers of certain statutory or regulatory provisions of programs included in IASA as well as certain programs of the Perkins Act. STWOA's waiver authority also covers JTPA. USED and Congress deliberately included the possibility of waivers in order to increase the flexibility of the federal funding and to facilitate inter-program coordination. However, as a federal official at the St. Louis conference pointed out, when making the case for a waiver, states should always keep in mind that the purpose of waivers is to make education of students better, not to make administration easier, (although it should have this side effect).

For most states, it is too early in the planning and implementation process to identify specific waivers that would remove significant barriers to implementing their STW system visions. In response to a 50-state survey on school-to-work system-building efforts conducted by CCSSO in summer 1994, only two states provided examples of actual waiver requests. These are summarized in Figure 1.

At the St. Louis conference, states were intrigued by the possibility of waivers and questioned officials from USED closely about details of the new policy. Important points that emerged included the following:

- The waiver authority in the Goals 2000 legislation is broader than that in either STWOA or IASA because it covers the basic regulatory code for USED (known as GEPA and EDGAR). For example, under Goals 2000, a state may request a waiver of the familiar "supplement not supplant" rule for use of federal funds.

- USED has established a waiver review action board chaired by the Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education.

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Figure 1

Examples of Waiver Requests

Perkins Act

Request:	Permission to use Perkins funds to support student stipends at the local level.
Reasons:	To offset costs of training to the employer. To provide the employer with liability safeguards.

JTPA

Request:	Permission to co-mingle JTPA and other federal and state funds.
Reason:	So that funds can be distributed to local consortia without the need to track JTPA expenditures on an individual participant basis.
Request:	Waiver of requirement that not less than 50 percent of Title II-C funds be restricted to serving out-of-school individuals.
Reason:	SDAs are integral to the planned STW system which is designed to serve ***all*** students.
Request:	Permission to use JTPA funds for advanced learning systems.
Reason:	Federal audits have disallowed such uses in the past because of eligibility documentation requirements and prohibitions against shared use of equipment.

Higher Education Act

Request:	Waiver of determination that work-based learning sites must be classified as "branch campuses" of the home institution.
Reason:	Unclear.

- The Inspector General's Office is a full partner in operationalizing the new ways of doing business inherent in Goals 2000, STWOA, and IASA. An approved waiver will be considered a binding legal document under audit rules.

From the perspective of a state that has experience in granting waivers to school districts, a representative from Oregon advised conference participants that their experience has confirmed that each level of a system overinterprets rules and regulations imposed by higher levels. Many creative things can actually be done without waivers.

Several states expressed concern about regulations that apparently cannot be waived. A representative from Kentucky, for example, noted that his state is using a regional structure for K-14 education systems as the basis for developing the school-to-work transition. However, the Perkins Act requires apparently unwaiverable, separate tracking of funding for secondary and post-secondary levels, which is burdensome and detracts from efforts to build overall coherence in the system. Federal officials noted that the relationship of Perkins to the new legislation has political overtones and remains to be clarified.

In the coming months, there will no doubt be many questions and debates between the states and the federal government about which regulations may be waived and which may not. During this definitional period, it will be important for all parties to maintain a consistent focus

on the central **purpose** of waivers: improved results for students. The Educational Flexibility Partnership Demonstration Grant (EDFLEX) experiment authorized in the Goals 2000 legislation can be an important mechanism for evaluating the impacts of various kinds of waivers. This demonstration—which can involve up to six states—allows the Secretary of Education to devolve waiver-making authority over allowable federal programs to the state level. Oregon has already applied to be part of this experiment.

The Challenge

The initial challenge for states interested in proceeding with a consolidated plan for federal programs is creation of a conceptual framework to guide the work that lies ahead. Development of this framework takes considerable effort since it must be based on widespread consensus about the vision, goals, and direction of a state's systemic reform plans. States seem to fall into two categories in their approach to this task: (1) those that are using what the Goals 2000 legislation refers to as a pre-existing state plan and (2) those that are using the first year of their Goals 2000 funds to develop or expand an overarching plan. States with well-developed, pre-existing state educational reform initiatives have been able to move most quickly toward consolidated planning for federal programs for the simple reason that they already have a conceptual framework in place. The examples of Oregon and Kentucky illustrate how the federal support for systemic reform in education can be molded to fit a particular state reform agenda.

Both Oregon and Kentucky happen to have codified their conceptual frameworks for systemic reform in legislation. In other states, this may be neither appropriate nor necessary. For example, Louisiana has been "growing" a statewide educational reform effort through governance and non-legislative policy links be-

Oregon

Oregon traces its educational reform efforts back to the mid-1980s. Its current systemic reform agenda rests on a succession of plans and statutes that have established Common Curriculum Goals, Essential Learning Skills, standards and assessments, school site councils for school restructuring, professional development opportunities for teachers, and waiver authority for the State Board of Education. The current state reform plan is modeled on *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages* and is codified through **The Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century** (1991) and **The Workforce Quality Act** (1991). The state's implementation plan is called **Workforce 2000**; it supports the development of model Certificates of Initial and Advanced Mastery (CIM and CAM), expansion of Tech Prep programs and applied academic coursework, and pilot and demonstration sites for various kinds of restructuring models.

Systemic reform of education does not stand alone in Oregon. It has evolved as a key component of a vision for state economic and workforce development. Goals for this long-range vision are articulated as benchmarks (currently 272 of them covering all aspects of living and working in the state) developed by six steering committees with broad-based public input. Progress toward reaching the benchmarks is measured every two years. Many partnerships, commissions, and committees continue to work on aligning policies across and within sectors. There is consistent emphasis on pushing decisionmaking down to regional, community, and school district levels.

Oregon's Educational Act for the 21st Century has been approved as its Goals 2000 plan. Its School-to-Work Opportunity Act implementation plan is grounded in both the education act and The Workforce Quality Act and is an integral part of the state's overall systemic reform initiative. Oregon has applied to become one of the six states that will serve as sites for the Education Flexibility Partnership Demonstration Program (EDFLEX) authorized in the federal Goals 2000 legislation.

With a systemic reform infrastructure solidly in place, Oregon intends to undertake development of a consolidated plan covering all allowable federal programs. It has begun by conducting a systems review, using some of its first year Goals 2000 planning money for this purpose. Participation in a conference sponsored by the Northwest Educational Laboratory in winter 1995 provided an Oregon team some time and technical assistance on identifying information needs for consolidated planning.

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Kentucky

The Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 (KERA) is, by definition, a conceptual framework for systemic education reform. By mandate of the court, it was designed to completely revamp a system that had been determined to be inequitable and therefore illegal. Key components of KERA that affect all districts and schools include school accountability standards, learner goals and academic expectations, portfolio and performance assessments, curriculum frameworks and content guidelines, a regional structure for professional development of educators, site-based decisionmaking at the school level, integrated services for families and youth, a State Council for Education Technology, and a new system for financing education. Reform strategies continue to evolve. For example, Kentucky is exploring development of certificates of initial and advanced mastery as possible additions to its new statewide assessment system.

As in Oregon, education reform in Kentucky is only one part of a larger state plan involving economic and workforce development. There are many partners involved and considerable cross-seeding of representation on advisory, policy, and implementation groups overseeing individual components of reform—an interlocking directorate.

KERA and its various implementation activities have been approved as Kentucky's Goals 2000 plan. Development of a school-to-work opportunity system is a key component of the state's plan for restructuring secondary schools, but the school-to-work office is housed in the Workforce Development Cabinet, and the implementation strategy involves 22 research-based Local Labor Market Areas defined by economic relationships among counties.

A consolidated plan for federal programs—on which Kentucky has begun work—makes a great deal of sense in the context of its broadly-based framework for reform and development. Categorical thinking is no longer functional in a system where so many artificial barriers are being dismantled.

tween several federal and state programs, including a Statewide Systemic Initiative for the reform of math and science education, an NSF-funded Collaborative for Excellence in the Preparation of Teachers, an Eisenhower frameworks grants, and, more recently, Goals 2000 and STWOA planning grants. Several states participating in the St. Louis conference spoke about new political contexts in which previously established state reform plans (whether legislated or not) seem to be in some jeopardy. For them, the master plan for Goals 2000 and/or STWOA may become the central focus for a new reform agenda.

The Issues

In a series of breakout groups and state-specific work sessions, participants in the St. Louis conference identified a set of core issues that they confront on the road to a coherent set of policies and programs that ensure a high quality education for all students. To the extent possible, states were also asked to suggest solutions to issues, problems, and barriers to consolidated planning for systemic reform. Needless to say, the list of issues was far longer than the list of solutions! Nevertheless, because the states represented a range of stages of development, states that were farther along in their planning and implementation were able to describe the processes and strategies that had allowed their efforts to progress.

Communication

Inevitably, conversations at the St. Louis conference returned time and again to communication issues. Breaking away from traditional, categorical thinking and moving toward reform of whole systems automatically means the opening of doors with hinges that squeak from lack of use. Sub-systems that have long operated autonomously and sometimes on autopilot are asked

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to cooperate in building a much more complex vehicle for service delivery. It is exciting and challenging, but it is at the same time a little scary and involves a learning curve.

Of the three pieces of federal legislation that are the focus of this article, STWOA tends to create the greatest need for communication among individuals and organizations who do not necessarily, at least at the outset, have a common lens for viewing its purposes or even a common language for discussing its components. While STWOA has great potential for becoming the "glue" that binds together many partners, and in fact, the legislation itself talks of partnerships in a number of contexts, it remains to be seen whether or not it can fill this role. Some observers suggest that the consolidated plans provided for under IASA may stand a better chance of formalizing the partnerships among federal, state, and other stakeholders.

Nevertheless, the states seem to recognize school-to-work's potential for collaboration and coordination among programs. They also understand that the funding associated with STWOA has a limited life, and that they must, from the outset, examine how established federal *programs* that have traditionally operated in isolation from each other can be shaped into a coherent whole under the STW system umbrella. When the CCSSO survey asked states to indicate whether particular federal programs were being linked to STW system development efforts, many planned or actual connections were reported (Table 2).

Table 3 indicates that a substantial number of states are casting a wide net as they think about possible relationships between existing programs and their emerging STW systems. However, there is quite a range in the complexity of states' intentions around the program coordination issue, as Table 4 shows. States tend to cluster at the extremes of the scale, with the largest group (8) indicating that they will involve all the listed programs in their system. A group nearly as large (6) indicated that they plan no inter-program coordination at all.

Table 2

State Intentions for Coordination of STW System Building with Other Federal Programs

(N = 39 states)

Program	Number of States
Carl Perkins Act	28
Goals 2000	27
JTPA	27
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	22
National Skills Standards Act of 1994	20
Adult Education	19
National Apprenticeship Act	19
Elementary & Secondary Education Act	18
Rehabilitation Act	18
Community Service Act	14
Higher Education Act	13
Job Opportunity Basic Skills Training Program (Title IV, Part F of the Social Security Act)	12

Table 3

Anticipated Complexity of Program Coordination Efforts

(N = 39 states)

No. of Other Federal Programs That Will Be Coordinated With the STW System (Maximum = 12)	Number of States
12	8
11	2
10	1
9	2
8	3
7	3
6	1
5	2
3	3
2	2
1	1
0	6
	Mean = 6
Don't know yet	5

While states who anticipate no coordination with other federal programs probably do not yet fully understand the intent of STWOA and those who plan to create coordination among all or most of the federal programs may be overly optimistic, the overall import of these data is that in a fair number of states, leaders expect to bring together individuals from a large number of divisions, agencies, and sectors through school-to-work. Federal programs get housed in different places in different states, but it is plausible to project that the 12 acts listed in Exhibit 3 are administered from a minimum of three state agencies, and each represents an office, if not a division or a department, within an agency.

The survey data reported on in Tables 2 and 3 really only represent one sector (state government) of the total number of stakeholder groups with an interest in STW. At the St. Louis conference, participants also shared concerns about communication issues involving state and local educators; government officials, and policymakers; parents and the general public; business and industry; and the federal government.

Communication with state and local professionals and policymakers. However broadly-based and large the planning groups are for developing consolidated plans, they will still only involve the tiniest fraction of state and local staff and administrators who must develop a deep understanding of and buy-in to the desired direction of systemic reform. Even in a small state, you are talking about communicating a vision and implementation strategies to hundreds of professionals. In a large state like California, the numbers are in the thousands. A state education leader from California noted that her state has an infrastructure of 10 regions and 58 county offices that can be helpful with communication and dissemination, but it will nevertheless be a massive task to reach over 1,000 school districts and about 7,700 schools.

In the rush to get state planning for Goals 2000, STWOA, and IASA underway, too little attention may have been paid so far to cueing in local level educators, according to Jack MacDonald of CCSSO. He sees a gap in the transfer of clear information about the new federal legislation from the state to the local level. Confirming this observation, one state said that their toughest audience on systemic reform issues is the State Board of Education, where members view their primary role to be the protectors of local control. CCSSO expects to provide technical assistance on state-local communication issues as the Goals 2000 state planning process unfolds.

Intra-agency communication issues. As they begin the collaborative work that will lead to a consolidated plan, state education agencies are finding that an important first step for participants is getting to know more about what other divisions do within their own agency. Staff in state agencies tend to be specialists: Title I program personnel know little about vocational education, and vice versa. It is hard to think or talk about linkages or integration of programs without developing some background knowledge. In South Dakota, the meetings that a planning group has been holding every three weeks is thought of as professional development for the staff of government agencies. Louisiana has created various working groups for planning purposes within the SEA and finds that a key function of the groups is educational.

Interagency communication issues. Building a school-to-work transition system requires interagency and interorganizational collaborations at all levels, including the federal level. Collaboration has to be worked at, and very often, the first bridge to be crossed is development of a common language for talking about the issues involved. Language barriers can be as simple as the fact that educators talk about students while administrators of work-based training programs think in terms of clients. Reflecting on her state's protracted efforts to hammer out a vision for a school-to-work system that is mutually acceptable to educators, state economic development planners, and the governor's office, one white-haired state education department official only half-jokingly noted that when planning for school-to-work began, she was a brunette!

Communication with the public. A major communication issue raised by virtually every state at the St. Louis conference is how to explain the school-to-work and Goals 2000 agendas to the public in general and parents in particular. In many if not all of the states, terms such as "standards-based," "outcomes-based," and "opportunity-to-learn" have acquired a political meaning that the framers of the legislation had not necessarily anticipated. States are having to find new language to articulate the components of systemic reform in ways that do not immediately raise red flags.

The states are using different approaches to both promote systemic reform and diffuse the politics of language that have formed around it. In one case, for example, school-to-work was described as being "on a political hit list because of its outcomes orientation," although so far, the opposition is not terribly organized. Reform leaders in this state are being very careful to always talk about school-to-work as a system, not as a program, since the broader concept—with its many component pieces—is harder to attack. Nevertheless, leaders reported that it is "still a hard sell" with the public. A representative from another state noted that negative public attitudes toward proposed educational reforms are often formed in ignorance of the proposals. She has taken to providing opponents of her state's education reform plan with a copy of the state's education reform legislation so that they can at least make an informed decision on where they stand. Elsewhere, the state School-to-Work Office is developing prototype public information materials but will encourage the regional areas that it is using as a system structure to adapt and tailor them for local audiences.

In small group sessions, several states raised the issue of engaging the media in communicating with the public about the systemic reform agenda. Some had tried this route with positive results. For example, a California newspaper ran profiles of different kinds of student learners, shedding a positive light on applied and hands-on educational experiences. Other states have had media coverage backfire on them when reporters did not know how to interpret what they saw or misreported what they were told. One participant noted "Unfortunately, [the opposition] is better at this than we are. We need to get better [at using the media]."

Communicating with business and industry. It is often stated, and undoubtedly true, that without the unqualified support of the business community, systemic reform of education cannot succeed. This is particularly true for school-to-work, with its emphasis on expanding work-based learning opportunities for high school students, but the state panels that will develop Goals 2000 plans must also include business representatives.

The state teams participating in the St. Louis conference indicated that building active partnerships with business and industry is a high priority on their reform agendas. In some of the states, education reform is already tightly coupled with a state economic or workforce development plan. Others are at an earlier stage of building systemic linkages between the education system and the employment sector. One specific communication issue related to business involvement that the group raised was how to involve small and medium-sized employers. Business representatives to education reform planning groups tend to be from a state's large and prominent corporations, yet there are hundreds of small businesses that will be an important resource for developing work-based experience placements during the implementation phase of school-to-work transition systems.

Another issue is how to organize business and industry into an effective counter-lobby to groups that oppose standards-based education and training. For the most part, employers seem to be favorably disposed to defining standards that will allow them to judge the work readiness of potential employees.

Based on their own experiences, states had a number of suggestions for how to leverage business support for systemic reform:

- Use the business infrastructure such as Chamber of Commerce to reach larger numbers of employers
- Use employers already active in reform efforts to recruit more employers
- Include business people in planning groups for all educational improvement initiatives
- Place teachers in business internships to learn first hand about employer needs

The federal role in communicating. States at the St. Louis conference had two kinds of concerns about the federal role in an overall communication strategy. First, they felt that high level federal officials should consistently make opportunities to promote the big ideas that link Goals 2000, STWOA, and IASA as coherent federal policy. As an example, one conference participant wondered if Secretary of Labor Robert Reich would be addressing an upcoming, federally-sponsored meeting of representatives from state departments of labor. If so, perhaps he could promote school-to-work since labor has been a reluctant partner in many states. That there is a continuing role for the federal level in explaining the philosophy and goals behind the three pieces of legislation was highlighted by the fact that some states participating in the conference expressed confusion about the purposes of the acts and their interrelationships.

A second communication issue for the federal level relates to ensuring that all relevant federal

employees have a clear understanding about what the various pieces of legislation allow and do not allow, and how the federal/state relationship under these acts varies from business as usual. A representative from USED assured states attending the conference that department auditors and the Inspector General's Office were on board and aware of the need to learn a different language and approach to compliance issues. However, the states also expressed concern about the re-education of staff in program offices such as Compensatory Education.

Turf Issues

Communication barriers are usually the first issues raised when planners and implementers of reform have the opportunity to share their experiences, but a related issue is never far behind: the tendency of individuals, groups, organizations, and interests to instinctively protect their own territorial responsibilities and resources. In a seriously reform-oriented context, there is a tension between excitement over new possibilities and apprehension that change will somehow diminish status or even threaten the existence of traditional roles. Coordinated planning for Goals 2000, STWOA, and IASA inevitably brings turf factors into play.

Once again, the CCSSO state survey on school-to-work planning and implementation gives us a sense of the breadth of participation in system development. Table 4 summarizes the survey information that states reported on the involvement of state agencies and non-governmental partners in the system-building process.

Table 4

Participation in Planning and Implementation of State STW Systems

(N = 42)

Key Entities in Planning and Implementation Process	Number of States Reporting Participation
State education agency	21
Postsecondary agency	18
Governor's office	17
Employment services agency	14
Private sector representatives	14
Representatives of organized labor	11
Vocational education division	10
Labor department	10
Commerce department	6
Human resources entities	6
Vocational rehabilitation division	5
Perkins and JTPA offices	5
Human services/welfare	4
State board of education members	3
Job training agency	3
State legislators	2

Most states have established one or more groups with broadly-based representation to assist in the planning and implementation phases of building a STW system (and the same is or will be true for Goals 2000). These groups have various titles—steering committee, stakeholder group, task force, council, advisory board, etc.—but their collective purposes are to bring together the many parties with an interest in the system around a collaborative effort to improve it. The most obviously missing voices in state-level system development are those of local level educators, parents, and students. Their participation is likely to be more prominent on councils and boards established by local partnerships and initiatives under Goals 2000 and STWOA.

Despite the fact that states have formed groups that bring many stakeholders to the table, the state-level, day-to-day activities of administering the federal grants are generally the responsibility of an office in a single agency. Decisions about where to place the school-to-work office, for example, have generally been made at high levels (often the Governor's office) for reasons that remain obscure to other agencies or offices with claims to expertise in the school-based or work-based aspects of implementation. The resentments engendered by these circumstances often color the discussion in the early meetings of the broad-based advisory or policy group. In some cases, these turf issues have been dispensed with quite expeditiously. In other states, however, protracted turf debates are slowing the progress of school-to-work planning and may jeopardize efforts to create consolidated state plans for Goals 2000, STWOA, and IASA.

Governors' offices have taken a strong interest in school-to-work planning and may do so with Goals 2000 as well. This is often a plus for the initiatives because it gives them a prominence on the overall state policy agenda that they might not otherwise enjoy. However, it also places the initiatives in an inherently political context that can result in a good deal of ambiguity when the governorship turns over. A number of states at the St. Louis conference found themselves in that position following the November 1994 election. In January 1995, they were proceeding cautiously and quietly with STWOA and Goals 2000 planning while waiting for some sign of gubernatorial support. Taking a cue from the experiences of other states, the Louisiana coordinated planning team said that it intended to invite all announced candidates for next year's governors race to join in the planning process, thus hopefully gaining support and buy-in no matter who is elected.

Relationship between K-12 and higher education. Table 4 shows that state K-12 education agencies and agencies governing postsecondary education were the most frequently cited entities participating in school-to-work planning and development. This is interesting, because anecdotal evidence from the states indicates that some of the biggest turf issues to be worked out involve precisely those two levels of the state education system. Assuming that they are successfully implemented, the reform ideas that are at the heart of the Goals 2000 and STWOA philosophies (e.g., high standards for **all** students, the value of hands-on and applied learning, performance-based assessments of student progress) will ultimately have profound implications for postsecondary institutions in the areas of student eligibility, admissions criteria, and very likely what goes on in the college classroom as well. In many states, these ramifications are not yet well understood.

The range of higher education's involvement in states' K-12 systemic reform efforts seems to be fairly wide. In some states, they are not yet at the table. In others, they are limited, reluctant, and sometimes contentious participants in advisory or policy groups. Elsewhere, they have genuinely engaged with the reform issues and are active partners in the reform effort. In Ken-

tucky, for example, state leaders with responsibility for administering all levels of the state's postsecondary institutions (4-year institutions, community colleges, technical colleges) are members of both the Workforce Partnership Council (the policy group for school-to-work) and the Development and Implementation Team (the working group for school-to-work). These bodies have been meeting, talking, and planning for many months and report that they have made much progress. Nevertheless, they also acknowledge that there are still several unresolved turf issues. In California as well, systemic reform leaders have worked hard to gain the early involvement of higher education which, as one leader put it, "is especially important if you are going to really get across the all-students philosophy."

State and local turf issues. Particularly in a political climate emphasizing devolution of decisionmaking, the states at the St. Louis conference reported that they were taking great care to avoid state mandates as they developed their plans for Goals 2000, STWOA, and IASA. Several states said that their aim is to explicitly model the kind of desired cooperation and collaboration at the state level that they would like to see replicated by local partnerships. However, there is no guarantee that locals will initially understand the modeling, which makes an ongoing state technical assistance role important. Speaking of the challenges for the modeling strategy in her state, one state representative noted that the problems of vested interests and provincialism at the local level will be significant barriers to systemic reform.

Resources

Participants at the St. Louis conference raised two generic types of resource issues: (1) funding and (2) time. Since, as the saying goes, "time is money," the two issues are closely related.

In general, the states understand that the funding provided by STWOA and Goals 2000 is for a limited time period and should be viewed as venture capital for initiating strategies for systemic reform that will continue into the next century. They also recognize that the systemic reform task is massive and difficult and may barely get off the ground during the period of federal support. While the federal money is significant and helpful, it is far too limited to take reform to a statewide scale. In theory, if there is widespread support for the direction of the reforms, then states will augment and continue the efforts through their own budgets, and in the best of times, this might be so. Several states, however, painted bleak pictures of worsening fiscal situations for state education funding that made it hard to imagine where increased support for reform might come from. One state that is often thought of as a lighthouse state for educational reform pointed to the fact that in terms of financial support for education, its ranking among the 50 states has declined dramatically over the past 30 years. In times of dwindling resources, it is difficult to create the energy for reform. Other states echoed this refrain.

Because the Goals 2000 and STWOA funds are recognized to be seed money, the states are being encouraged by federal leaders to think of the "budget" for systemic reform as a realignment of all available resources. In terms of the federal contribution, this would include IASA, Perkins, and JTPA, among other programs. Conference participants raised specific questions about co-mingling of funding streams, but their more critical concerns were for the future of federal education and training funding levels and with the impact that block grants might have on the reform plans that they are developing. The ambiguity of the situation is disquieting and argues for slowing the pace of the planning process until some clarity is achieved.

The time-as-a-resource issues mentioned most frequently in St. Louis were longitudinal ones: the length of time that it takes to (1) get consensus around a state vision for systemic reform and (2) build a critical mass of state and local educators with a deep understanding of the vision and the ability to fully implement its component parts. Most of the states see long-term professional development strategies as key to the success of the enterprises they are planning. In South Dakota, for example, state agency staff are participating in a half day of professional development every three weeks to become more skilled in working together. Kentucky, using both federal and state funds, is investing heavily in preparing secondary teachers to teach in a more applied manner. In Mississippi, STWOA subgrants are being used, in part, to send teachers into industry so they will understand what the current labor market requires.

Equity

For 30 years, federal education, training, and employment policy has focused on targeting extra resources to special segments of the population who must "qualify" for the services by virtue of some personal characteristic: economic or educational disadvantage, race or ethnicity, language orientation, gender, and so on. The objective has been to level the playing field and ensure equal access to opportunity in schools, the marketplace, and the culture. In recent years, however, this general federal strategy has been critiqued and found wanting from all quarters of the political spectrum. The recent federal education legislation represents a new approach to addressing equity issues.

Goals 2000 and STWOA are both based on the premise that our education system has been short-changing *all* students through its lack of rigor (standards). Therefore, the remedy is to reform the system for *all* students. Goals 2000 is, in effect, a promise to all students—but particularly the groups traditionally protected by federal policy—that they will be offered a "world class" education and supported to achieve at high levels. The level of expectations for students will not differ based on any individual characteristic, although the pathways to success may vary.

STWOA is a promise to all students that they will emerge from high school prepared for an entry-level job or further education and training. School-to-work systems will ensure that all students have access to applied academic learning and workplace experiences if they choose to participate in these opportunities.

At their heart, then, Goals 2000 and STWOA are about real equity, but the spin is totally different from the categorical and targeted strategies of previous decades. In terms of coordinated planning for federal programs, the issue becomes one of how formerly targeted programs with their previously isolated goals and expectations can be aligned to help groups with special needs reach the standards expected of all. For example, Title I of IASA has been redesigned to offer much greater flexibility in this regard for disadvantaged students. As they are reauthorized, other federal categorical programs will likely be aligned to allow the same kind of support for systemic reform.

STWOA—with its emphasis on applied learning and work-based experiences—raises some interesting and unique equity issues. How, for example, will rural students have access to work-based opportunities? Will college-bound students be discouraged from work-based experiences that they would like to have? In response to the CCSSO 50-state survey of states on school-to-work, states were asked to describe any strategies that they intended to employ for involving the full range of high school students. Figure 2 arrays the ideas of the states that responded to the item.

At the St. Louis conference, several participants raised the issue of perceptions of school-to-work

as an equity issue. There is a real danger, one participant asserted, that school-to-work will be seen as a vocational education program. In that case, many parents, students, and the public will categorize it as not relevant to them. A representative from another state pointed out that parents of minority students, in particular, may be against the involvement of their children if it seems at all like tracking. The Kentucky team noted that as a blueprint for systemic reform, the Kentucky Education Reform Act explicitly rests on the legitimacy and necessity of applied learning for all students. Similarly, the idea of Certificates of Initial and Advanced Mastery under development in Oregon and now in other states as well dispenses with the idea that students are vocational or not vocational: they are all pointed at the same outcome and will get there in their own ways. Still the vocational education stigma issue is real and must be accounted for. Some of the states suggested that this is an area where the federal bully pulpit could be useful to them.

Figure 2

States' Ideas for Involving Special Populations

Low Achieving Students

Tutors or mentors (4 states)

Remediation (3 states)

Outreach activities (3 states)

Students with Disabilities

Assistance with transition planning (2 states)

Support services—e.g., special equipment, interpreters (2 states)

Including organizations that work with disabled people in STW planning (1 state)

Technical assistance for teachers, mentors, employers, and counselors (1 state)

Special recruitment strategies (1 state)

Young Women

Use Perkins and Non-traditional Employment for Women Act funds to ensure equal access (3 states)

Emphasize recruitment of women (3 states)

Use of non-traditional role model mentors (3 states)

Reimburse young mothers for childcare costs (2 states)

Students from Low-Income Families

Provide support services (5 states)

Provide tutoring (2 states)

Use of Perkins or JTPA 8% funds for targeted programming (2 states)

Students with Limited English Proficiency

Provide translators (2 states)

Provide tutors (2 states)

Collaborate with ESL programs (1 state)

Develop bilingual recruitment materials (1 state)

Students from Rural Communities

Form STW consortia by combining low-density school districts (1 state)

Develop video consortia (1 state)

School-based enterprises (1 state)

Academically Talented Students

Marketing strategies emphasizing career options and links to higher education

Collaboration with state gifted and talented staff

School Dropouts

Use of JTPA funds to ensure access

Emphasis on early career exploration for dropout prevention

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Conclusion

This paper has tried to give a sense of how states are thinking about and acting on the planning requirements and opportunities associated with Goals 2000, STWOA, and IASA. The idea of developing a consolidated plan that links these pieces of legislation and others has an inherent appeal, yet it is clear that there are many issues to be resolved on the way to coherent educational reform. The hardest challenge may be to keep the focus on the big picture when it is so much easier and more comfortable to zero in on the part of the picture that you know well.

All of the states must soon decide whether or not they will attempt to develop a consolidated plan. In the Spring of 1995, each state will do one of two things: (1) submit traditional, isolated plans for Title I of the amended ESEA and each of the other formula-funded programs included in IASA or (2) submit a plan that details how, over the next year, the state will develop a conceptual framework for systemic reform and bring multiple federal programs into alignment under that umbrella—in short, a consolidated plan. ED estimates that the majority of states will select the two-stage option. We can therefore expect that 1995-96 will be a year in which a good deal more is learned about the challenges of coordinating program plans and operations. Through all of its activities, CCSSO will continue to support the states' efforts to grapple with these challenges.